DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 079 243 SP 006 637

AUTHOR Csapo, Marg
TITLE Practice What You Teach - An Attempt Towards Individualized Instruction.
PUB DATE [72]
NOTE 8p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Behavioral Objectives; *Course Objectives; *Emotionally Disturbed Children; *Exceptional Child Education; Exceptional Children; Imitation; Peer Teaching; Performance Based Teacher Education; *Performance Criteria

ABSTRACT

If one assumes the validity of the maxim of practicing what one preaches, it is not sound to train student teachers to teach exceptional children while ignoring the student teachers' individual differences in a rigid classroom system. A special education course dealing with emotionally disturbed children was designed as an attempt towards individualized instruction of teacher trainees. The educational objectives for the course were stated behaviorally: teacher trainees were to ignore inappropriate behavior and attend appropriate behavior; performance criteria were clearly stated and different responses were required from students. Results indicated that the students felt that having objectives and requirements expressed behaviorally and precisely presented the student with a clear picture of the course expectations. Peer teaching, or peer tutoring, was considered a valued experience. The appreciation of individualized teaching for specified objectives for emotionally disturbed children became a total experience both at course and classroom level. (JA)

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

AUG 1 1972

Practice what you teach. If the educational objective for a given special education course is to emphasize the essentials of individualized teaching then by recognizing the individual differences of teacher-trainees, a model is provided for imitation in their own classrooms.

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED 079243

SP 006 637

Practice what you teach - an attempt towards individualized instruction.

Marg Csapo.

Imitative behavior is fundamental to the learning process. Imitation facilitates learning by helping the subject to respond correctly to the proper environmental cue as he copies a correct and successful model (Miller and Dollard, 1941). In imitation learning, correct response to environmental cues can be made the first time, thus eliminating periods of "trial and error" learning. A preliminary phase of imitation is useful in the early stages of learning since the individual can have some assurance that independent responses to environmental cues can be met with a resonable degree of success. This provides for success rather than failure experiences (Csapo, 1972). Bandura and Walters (1963) point out that the provision of a model in actual or symbolic form is an important social agent for the transmission and controlling of behavior.

Provided one of our educational objectives in special education is to develop the skills of effective and efficient techniques of educational rehabilitation then the stage for modelling has to be set during training. Practitioners learn by doing and the teacher training years provide ample opportunity for the presentation of models which will facilitate learning and help reaching the specified targets of various courses. The importance of practicing what one preaches or, since we prefer more versatile modes of presentation to preaching, practicing what one teaches, cannot be over emphasized.

Supposing that one of the objectives is to teach that individual instruction is desirable and essential for effective teaching (Bateman, 1971), then the course where every teacher trainee is presented with the same materials, expected to produce the same responses, at the same rate, to scratch the surface to the same depth, to be evaluated by the same group

norm provides a diametrically opposite model to this objective.

Individualized teaching in the classroom should begin with the recognition of individual differences during the training program. Students lumped together, expected to go through the mill as a herd, starting and finishing at the same time do not provide the trainee with the specific model for future classroom behavior, nor does it provide any reassurance that his independent responses at a later stage will be met with a reasonable degree of success.

By practicing what we teach the recognition that student teachers enter our training program with varying degrees of competence to perform certain skills, becomes an important issue. If one of our objectives is to teach that instruction should begin at the appropriate rung on the task ladder in order to enable the learner to meet with success rather than failure experiences, then the teacher education program has to provide a model for imitation.

A special education course dealing with emotionally disturbed children was designed as an attempt towards individualized instruction of teacher-trainees.

In order to develop essential teacher skills for dealing with behaviors of emotionally disturbed children preparation of the course outline emphasized the following three areas:

(1) The educational objectives for the course were stated behaviorally, (Bateman, 1971), e.g. teacher trainee will ignore inappropriate behavior and attend to appropriate behavior; teacher trainee will achieve an increase in applying positive reinforcement to individual pupils, and to the group;

(2) Performance criteria of how well a teacher trainee is expected to perform the skill for the educational objectives at various stages of the course were clearly stated, e.g. teacher trainee will produce

a four times change of her baseline rate of attending to appropriate behaviors by October 30th.

(3) Various routes to achieve the skills of the educational objectives for the course were planned and the student assumed responsibility for selecting the route most likely to produce results for him.

Individualization of teaching was presented along the following dimensions:

(1) Different responses were required from students. If a student teacher began the course already able to perform some of the specific skills required to reach the specified educational objectives (skills or theory), then once he demonstrated his competence in that area he could proceed towards the next educational objective.

(2) The presentation of different materials aided the student to obtain information at a selected level. Materials were provided in sequential small units. Diversified learning materials, library books, journals, video tapes, films, field trips, field work experiences, etc. provided opportunities to reach educational targets.

(3) Teacher time for one to one teaching, advising, observing, evaluating was provided.

(4) Tasks were assigned where peer teaching, peer discussion and preparation aided the trainee toward the acquisition of specified objectives.

(5) Teacher expectations were clearly defined. The student had the opportunity to sign a contract, selecting the mark he wished to obtain. Specific objectives for each level, pass, level II, level I were spelled out precisely.

(6) Immediate feedback provided the student with information of how well he did on the quizes, how well did he perform on a specific task.

(7) Checking daily progress: Visual clues of the progress made towards specific objectives gave the students opportunity to compete with their own previous achievement. Progress was evaluated weekly with the student: rate of increase, decrease or no change was discussed, strengths and weaknesses analyzed.

Results:

All students lived up to their contract requirements, that is, they reached the specific educational objectives selected by them at the beginning of the course. There were no dropouts, no "failures" since the above described attempts toward individualization of the course work allowed for success rather than failure experiences.

76.6% of the students signed first class contracts, 22.3% second class contracts, 1.1% pass level contracts. Within the first four weeks students encouraged by their own success changed their contracts for a higher level contract with more difficult expectations. This placed 86% of the students in the first class category and 14% in the second class, none at the pass level.

Data is presented on the teaching of 10 students who volunteered their time to teach in a program for educationally handicapped children and juvenile delinquents. Frequency counts on specific teacher skills, behavioral objectives of the course, were collected.

The following skills were observed:

(1) reinforcement of appropriate individual target behavior of pupil (course objective: 90% accuracy)

(2) ignoring of inappropriate behaviors (course objective: 90% accuracy)

(3) recording frequency of individual target behaviors (course objective: 90% accuracy)

. . . . . .

Insert figure 1 about here

. . . . . .

Figure 1 illustrates the daily mean, expressed in percent, of the three teaching skills for 10 students. The objective of 90% accuracy requirement was reached and exceeded by the student teachers under peer tutoring.

. . . . . .

Insert Figure 2 about here

. . . . . .

Figure 2 illustrates the daily mean of data points recorded on behavior changes achieved with individual children.

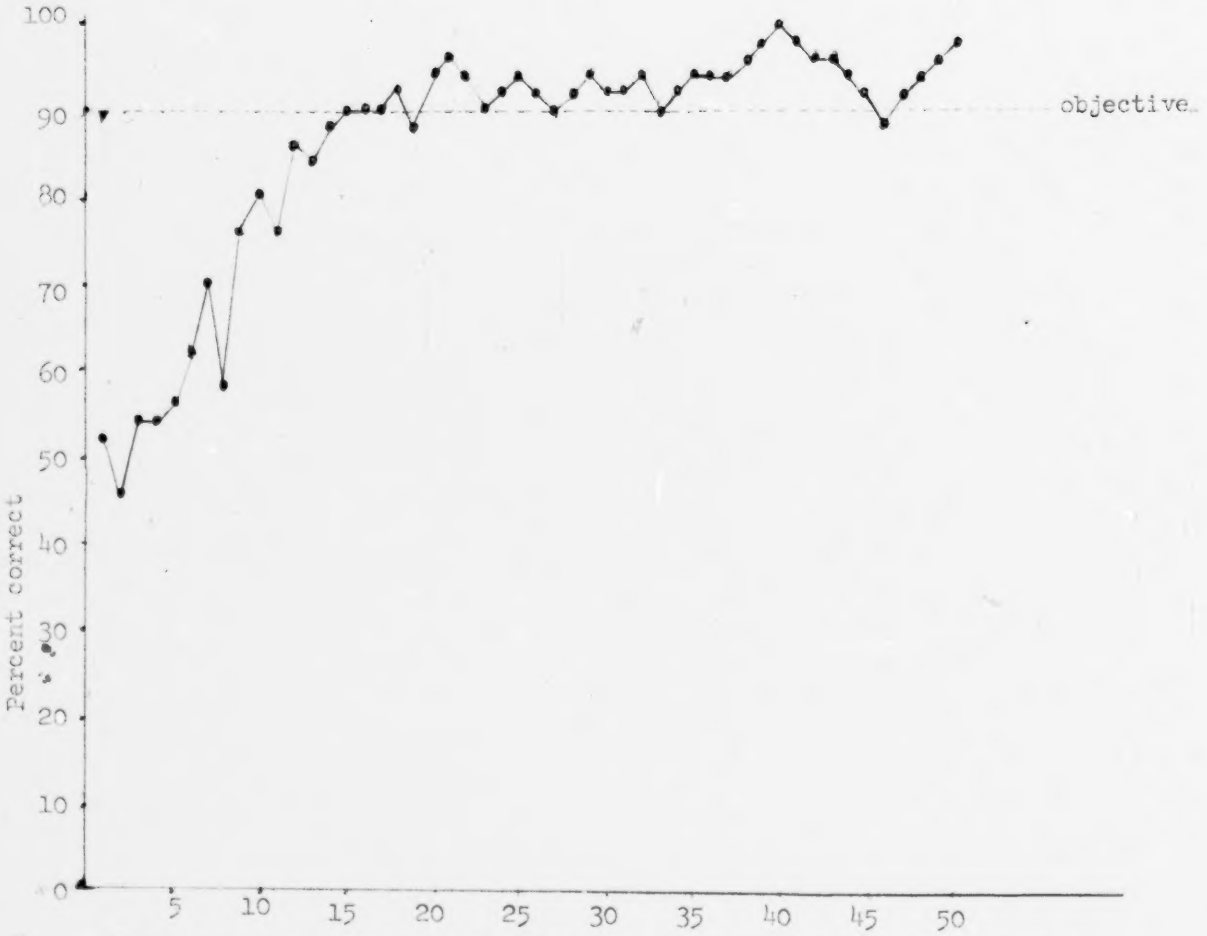
Observations:

Students felt that having objectives and requirements expressed behaviorally and precisely presented the student with a clear picture of course expectations. The progress charts which provided graphic representation of individual progress served as immediate feedback of one's progress.

While all responsibility for progress was placed on the student, he knew exactly what was expected from him and how to reach specific targets. Peer-teaching, peer-tutoring was considered as a valued experience.

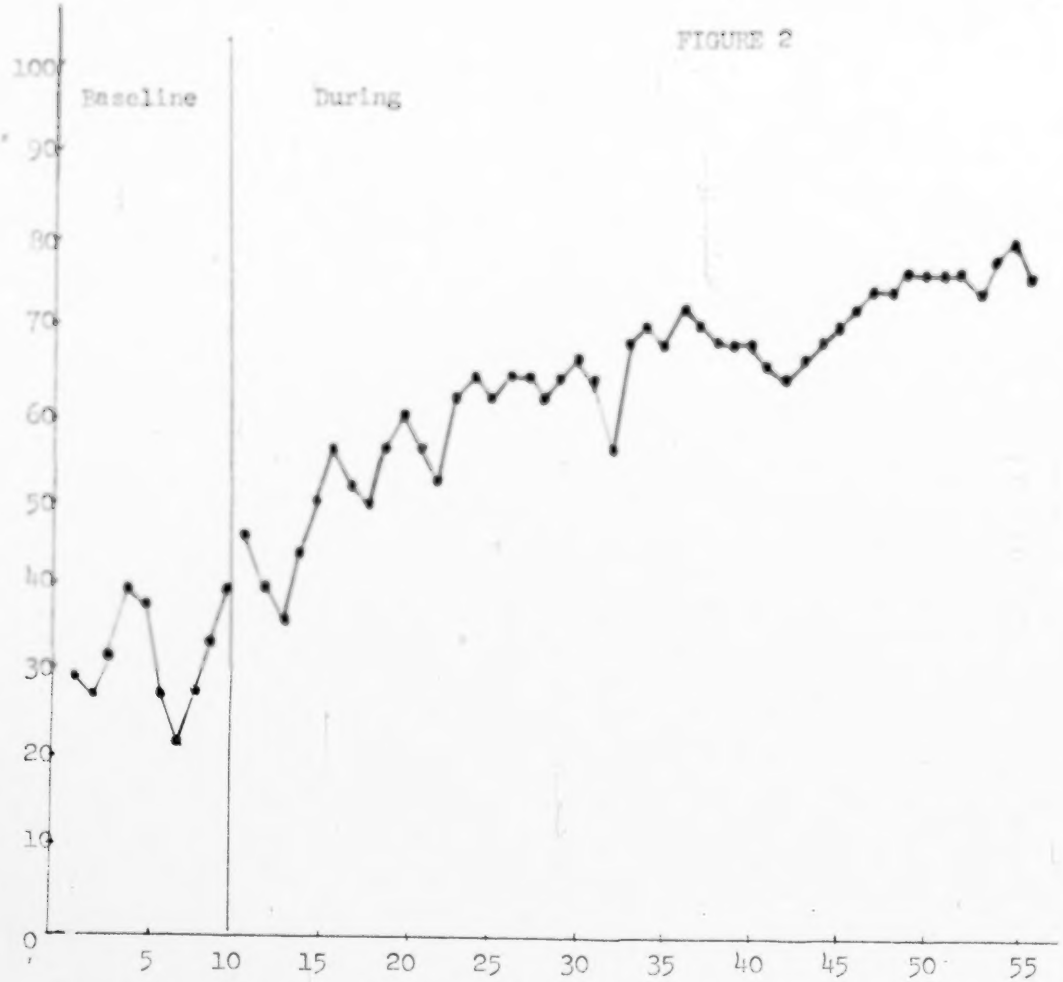
The appreciation of individualized teaching for reaching specified objectives for emotionally disturbed children became a total experience both at course level and classroom level.

FIGURE 1



Daily mean of 3 teaching skills (reinforcing appropriate individual target behavior, ignoring inappropriate behaviors, and recording the frequency of individual target behaviors) for ten students.

FIGURE 2



Daily mean of data points recorded on target behaviors (academic, social, and classroom conduct) of individual pupils.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bandura, A. and Walters, R.A. Social learning and personality development. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963.

Bateman, B. The Essentials of Teaching. Dimensions Publishing Co., 1971, San Rafael, Calif.

Csapo, M. Peers as Behavior change agents for emotionally disturbed children. Teaching Exceptional Children, in press.

Miller, N.E. and Dallard, J. Social learning and imitation. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941.